

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Dec 14 2021

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STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

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John Davidson, Principal Planner
City of Santa Clara
1500 Warburton Avenue
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Re: Freedom Circle Focus Area and Greystar General Plan Amendment Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear John Davidson:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Freedom Circle Focus Area and Greystar General Plan Amendment Project. We are committed to ensuring that impacts to the State's multimodal transportation system and to our natural environment are identified and mitigated to support a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system. The following comments are based on our review of the November 2021 DEIR.

Project Understanding

The Freedom Circle project consists of two components: the development and incorporation of a Focus Area into the General Plan and the Greystar General Plan Amendment. The Focus Area is bounded by San Tomas Aquino Creek to the east, Great America Parkway (pkwy) to the west, Great America Theme Park to the north, and US-101 to the south.

The Focus Area would allow, subject to future a planning study, 2,500 dwelling units beyond those anticipated in the Greystar General Plan Amendment and 2 million square feet of additional office space beyond that allowed under the current high-intensity office designation. The Greystar General Plan Amendment proposes to change the General Plan land use designation for the 13.3-acre Greystar site and to construct a total of 1,100 dwelling units in three 7-story buildings and up to 2,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving retail.

Travel Demand Analysis

Caltrans commends the Lead Agency for integrating transit-oriented design elements and multimodal transportation options into the project design. The project VMT analysis and significance determination are undertaken in a manner consistent with the Office of Planning and Research's (OPR) Technical Advisory. Per the DEIR, this project is found to have a less than significant VMT impact, therefore working towards meeting the State's VMT reduction goals.

Multimodal Transportation

The US-101 crossing at Bowers Avenue/Great America Parkway is identified as having a high level of traffic stress (LTS 4) for bicyclists, while having a high non-recreational bicycle demand per the [District 4 Bike Plan \(2018\)](#). To facilitate active transportation, Caltrans recommends upgrading the current Class II bike lanes to include a buffer or upgrading the facilities to Class VI protected bike lanes; each solution should be accompanied by green bike conflict striping along the ramps intersections. To improve pedestrian facilities, Caltrans recommends high-visibility striping with advanced yield markings at the ramp crossings.

Hydrology

As requested in our Notice of Preparation comments, and when available, please provide storm drainage plans that note whether the project will impact Caltrans' drainage facilities near US-101. Any increase in runoff that drains towards the Caltrans' Right of Way (ROW) should be metered to pre-construction levels

Construction-Related Impacts

Potential impacts to Caltrans' ROW from project-related temporary access points should be analyzed. Mitigation for significant impacts due to construction and noise should be identified. Project work that requires movement of oversized or excessive load vehicles on State roadways requires a transportation permit that is issued by Caltrans. To apply, visit: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/transportation-permits>. Prior to construction, coordination may be required with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to reduce construction traffic impacts to the STN.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the City of Santa Clara is responsible for all project mitigation, including any needed improvements to the State Transportation Network (STN). The project's fair share contribution, financing, scheduling, implementation responsibilities and lead agency monitoring should be fully discussed for all proposed mitigation measures.

Encroachment Permit

Please be advised that any permanent work or temporary traffic control that encroaches onto Caltrans' ROW requires a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit. As part of the encroachment permit submittal process, you may be asked by the Office of Encroachment Permits to submit a completed encroachment permit application package, digital set of plans clearly delineating Caltrans' ROW, digital copy of signed, dated and stamped (include stamp expiration date) traffic control plans, this comment letter, your response to the comment letter, and where applicable, the following items: new or amended Maintenance Agreement (MA), approved Design Standard Decision Document (DSDD), approved encroachment exception request, and/or airspace lease agreement. Your application package may be emailed to D4Permits@dot.ca.gov.

To download the permit application and to obtain more information on all required documentation, visit <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep/applications>.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, or for future notifications and requests for review of new projects, please email LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Leong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

MARK LEONG
District Branch Chief
Local Development Review

c: State Clearinghouse